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EDITORIAL NOTES

Commissioner Claxton has on several occasions made public announcement of the policy which he expects to adopt during the coming year, for the federal Bureau of Education. His plans are comprehensive, and include many types of research which the bureau has up to this time been unable to undertake because of lack of funds. It will be necessary in order to accomplish what Commissioner Claxton has in mind that Congress be very much more generous in its appropriations to the bureau than at any time in the past. Funds are to be asked for, not merely for the publication of statistical reports, but also for the pursuit of a number of general investigations of the educational activities of the country.

There is one difficulty which the aggressive plans of the new commissioner will encounter. A number of agencies in other bureaus, and even in other departments of the federal government, have been placed in charge of educational interests. This subdivision of educational activities has gone so far that there is some danger that the bureau will find its work scattered about in various offices. Thus the general supervision of agricultural education is in the hands of the Department of Agriculture. The promotion of industrial education is rapidly passing over into the hands of the Bureau of Labor of the Department of Commerce and Labor. Mr. Charles H. Winslow, as the special agent of the Bureau of Labor, has recently been engaged in bringing together a large body of valuable material describing the various experiments which are now being made in the country to provide industrial education either in private or in public schools. The Department of Commerce and Labor has also assumed charge of the legislation for the improvement of working conditions among children. This labor legislation may very properly be regarded as a part of the work of the Department of Commerce and Labor. And yet the interests of education are so

intimately bound up in all of the labor legislation which applies to children that there is danger as stated above that the educational interests will become scattered throughout all of the different departments, and thus lack the unity which they should derive from the central control of educational activities through the Bureau of Education. Certainly if this undesirable disintegration of educational interests is to be avoided, it is time that a vigorous policy be adopted both by the Bureau of Education in Washington and by all who are interested in educational organization throughout the country.

It will be quite impossible for the new commissioner to carry through his comprehensive plans without the support of those who are interested in education. It is not enough that this interest should express itself from time to time in formal resolutions passed at gatherings of teachers. There must be active support, and this support must be given in such a way as to be effective in Washington. The difficulty which exists now is that the ordinary representative who goes to Washington has never had it impressed upon him that the Bureau of Education is a matter of large interest to his constituents at home. This same representative knows perfectly well that the interests of the Department of Agriculture are of great importance to his constituents. This fact has been brought home to him by many references during the campaign in which he was elected, to the work of the Department of Agriculture. The teachers of his community, on the other hand, are in very large numbers not voters, and in the second place, they have never taken the pains to draw his attention to the important contributions which are being made by the federal bureau to the general movement of education. Indeed, it may be doubted whether all of the teachers in the public schools of this country are aware of the importance of the bureau as a clearing-house of information, and as a center for the distribution of this information. The new commissioner has a right to ask that school people inform themselves, first, with regard to the service which this bureau has rendered in the past to school organization in this country. He has a right to ask, in the second place, that his plans receive careful consideration from educators in every state;

Representatives Must Be Personally Interested

and finally, that these plans, if approved, be brought to the attention of representatives before they start for the Capitol. The representatives who go up from the different districts will in this way be prepared to act intelligently upon the recommendations of the commissioner, and will realize that these recommendations represent a demand which is as wide as the nation.

The first step in this general program of support of the commissioner consists in a clear recognition of the necessity of investigations. It has been pointed out repeatedly in this journal that there are at the present time many very efficient forms of school organization which are little understood by teachers outside of the immediate sphere of influence of these special experiments. There are forms of industrial education, there are methods of dealing with the problem of promotion and with the course of study, which could be made very influential if they could be understood and their results carefully tested. There is great need of some central agency which shall bring together in closer unity the high schools and the elementary schools. There is need of some central investigation of the normal-school problem. All of these larger interests will be properly served only when some agency broader in its interests than the state departments of education concerns itself with the consideration of educational practice and organization. The bureau ought to have in all of these investigations the heartiest support of the school people of the country. The bureau can serve a purpose which no other agency in this country is large enough or comprehensive enough to undertake. The commissioner ought to feel assured that he has the support of the individual members of the national school system. There can be no doubt that the time has arrived in the history of the bureau when it must expand and bring together the educational activities, or its functions will be subdivided among the various other departments of the central government.